

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4564
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
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E O 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, GE
SUBJ: GDR WRITER RAINER KUNZE LEAVES THE GDR

REF: BERLIN 5266

1. CONTROVERSIAL GDR WRITER RAINER KUNZE HAS
EMIGRATED TO THE FRG. REMOVED FROM THE GDR WRITERS
UNION WEEKS BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 1976 BIERMANN OUSTER,
KUNZE HAS BEEN FORBIDDEN FROM PUBLISHING IN THE GDR
AND HAD LIVED IN ISOLATION IN THE SMALL THURINGIAN
TOW OF GREIZ. GDR APPROVAL FOR KUNZE'S RECENT
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TRIP TO AUSTRIA TO RECEIVE A LITERARY PRIZE (REFTEL)
HAD BEEN WIDELY INTERPRETED AS A POSSIBLE SIGN OF
GROWING ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN THE SED AND CRITICAL GDR
WRITERS. THUS KUNZE'S DEPARTURE APPEARS TO HAVE COME
AS A SURPRISE IN GDR CULTURAL CIRCLES, AND HAS CAUSED
A NEGATIVE REACTION AMONG YOUNGER WRITERS WHO HAD BEEN
IN CONTACT WITH HIM IN JENA AND THE GERA DISTRICT.

2. IN A PREPARED STATEMENT ISSUED UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN THE FRG APRIL 13, KUNZE SAID THAT HIS APPLICATION TO EMIGRATE HAD BEEN APPROVED BY GDR AUTHORITIES WITHIN THREE DAYS. HE AS ALLOWED TO LEAVE WITH FAMILY AND A LARGE NUMBER OF PERSONAL POSSESSIONS, INCLUDING BOOKS. IN AN INTERVIEW ON FRG TELEVISION APRIL 18, KUNZE SOUGHT TO JUSTIFY HIS DECISION TO EMIGRATE IN REMARKS SEEMINGLY DIRECTED AT GDR VIEWERS ABOVE ALL. KUNZE SAID HE HAD FELT UNDER INCREASING PRESSURES FROM GDR AUTHORITIES AND HAD SUFFERED FROM WORSENING HEALTH IN RECENT MONTHS. (IN AN EARLIER INTERVIEW WITH THE SUEDEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG, KUNZE HAD SAID THAT PERSONAL PRESSURES AGAINST HIM AND HIS FAMILY RATHER THAN RESTRICTIONS ON HIS WRITING HAD BEEN THE MAJOR PROBLEM.) KUNZE SAID THAT HIS LEAVING WAS NOT A REJECTION OF THE "GDR STATE SYSTEM" OR OF "THE EAST," BUT RATHER OF THE "REAL, EXISTING, PRACTICED SYSTEM" IN THE GDR FROM WHICH NO NEW BEGINNING COULD BE EXPECTED.

4. KUNZE STRESSED THAT HIS FRIENDS IN THE GDR SHOULD NOT BE IRRITATED IF HE REMAINED QUIET IN THE WEST. HE HAD NOT BECOME RESIGNED, HE SAID, BUT HAD RISKED A NEW BEGINNING SO AS NOT TO BE FORCED INTO RESIGNATION. KUNZE ADMITTED IT HAD BEEN DIFFICULT TO LEAVE HIS FRIENDS BEHIND IN THE GDR.

5. COMMENT: A GDR STUDENT WITH EXCELLENT CONTACTS AMONG YOUNG WRITERS IN JENA, WHERE THE BIERMANN CRACKDOWN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAS THE HARSTEST, TOLD EMBOFF APRIL 16 THAT KUNZE'S SUDDEN DEPARTURE HAD DISAPPOINTED THOSE IN THE JENA-GERA AREA WHO HAD LOOKED TO KUNZE AS A MODEL. KUNZE WAS APPARENTLY THE ONE GDR WRITER WHO UNCEASINGLY DECLARED BOTH HIS INTENTION TO STAY IN THE GDR AND HIS COMMITMENT TO HELPING YOUNGER GDR WRITERS. KUNZE WAS NOW BEING SEEN AS AN OPPORTUNIST WHO HAD TURNED HIS BACK ON HIS GDR COLLEAGUES DURING DIFFICULT TIMES. ACCORDING TO THE STUDENT, KUNZE'S DEPARTURE HAD ONLY ADDED TO THE SENSE OF ISOLATION AND DEPRESSION AMONG STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS WHO HAD SUPPORTED BIERMANN IN THE GERA DISTRICT, AND IN JENA IN PARTICULAR.

6. WE HAVE HEARD RUMORS THAT ANOTHER PROMINENT GDR WRITER, JUREK BECKER, HAS ALSO EXPRESSED HIS INTENTION TO LEAVE THE GDR. RUMORS PERSIST THAT WELL-KNOWN GDR ACTOR MANFRED KRUG WILL ALSO LEAVE. THE GDR APPEARS PREPARED TO CONTINUE RIDDING ITSELF OF POTENTIAL DISSIDENTS BY SIMPLY ALLOWING THEM TO EMIGRATE TO THE

FRG.POLANSKY

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 19-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
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